

**SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 136**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator BOB SMITH

District 17 (Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Greenstein

SYNOPSIS

Urges federal government to take action to require manufacturers of single-use plastic products to assume responsibility for pollution caused by those products.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/16/2018)

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the federal government to
2 take all available actions to hold manufacturers of single-use
3 plastic products responsible for pollution caused by those
4 products.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastics can be defined as plastic packaging and
7 other consumer products that are designed to be used once and
8 discarded, and include, but are not limited to, bags, bottles, cups,
9 lids, straws, stirrers, and utensils, as well as plastic film wraps and
10 packaging; and
11 **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastics are certainly convenient; however, after
12 they serve their original purpose and are discarded, they have
13 significant negative impacts on the environment and public health;
14 and
15 **WHEREAS**, While some single-use plastics may be recycled, plastic
16 bag recycling is highly specialized, and significant volumes of
17 single-use plastics are disposed of as trash, ending up in landfills or
18 at incinerators, or become litter, blocking drainage systems,
19 polluting waterways and marine waters, and endangering fish,
20 wildlife, and human health; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Because plastic products typically do not biodegrade, but
22 instead break into smaller pieces, these materials continue to
23 accumulate in the natural environment, and in the marine
24 environment as single-use plastic products break down, they
25 degrade into smaller and smaller pieces, referred to as
26 microplastics, which in are eaten by fish and other marine life,
27 which then can enter the human food chain; and
28 **WHEREAS**, When plastic bags are put into most conventional recycling
29 bins, the bags jam and damage the recycling machinery increasing
30 labor costs, requiring expensive machinery repairs, and increasing
31 the costs of the recycling process for more profitable materials; and
32 **WHEREAS**, When plastic bags are thrown away and end up in landfills,
33 they negatively impact the environment by taking up valuable
34 space, not decomposing effectively, and becoming unsightly
35 airborne rubbish at the landfill, requiring special covering or
36 fencing to try to capture them to prevent them from becoming
37 unsightly litter that can end up in waterways; and
38 **WHEREAS**, When plastic bags reach the ocean or other sensitive
39 environments, they impact tourism, fishing, and shipping industries,
40 endanger or kill wildlife, and degrade water quality; and
41 **WHEREAS**, In New Jersey alone, approximately one million tons of
42 plastic waste is generated annually, of which approximately 58
43 percent goes to landfills and 28 percent is incinerated; and
44 **WHEREAS**, Plastic manufacture is the third largest manufacturing
45 industry in the country, and manufacturers of single-use plastic
46 products enjoy the financial benefits from the sale of these products
47 but do not assume any of the costs or responsibility associated with

1 the after-life of, or the environmental damage caused by, the
2 products; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Manufacturers should be held responsible for the
4 environmental and economic costs associated with their products
5 and be required to develop a waste management approach that
6 promotes sustainability, efficient resource management, and
7 mitigation of climate change; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Strong action at the federal level would assist states
9 throughout the country in dealing with the significant
10 environmental and public health issues associated with single-use
11 plastic products; now, therefore,

12
13 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the
14 General Assembly concurring):

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16 1. The federal government is urged to take all available action
17 to hold manufacturers of single-use plastic products responsible for
18 pollution caused by the use and disposal of those plastic products.

19 a. The Congress and President of the United States are urged to
20 enact federal legislation requiring manufacturer responsibility for
21 single-use plastic products.

22 b. The Attorney General of the United States is urged to take
23 action to institute litigation against manufacturers of single-use
24 plastic products to recoup clean-up costs, water filtration expenses,
25 and damages to natural resources caused by discarded single-use
26 plastic products.

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28 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
29 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
30 Secretary of the Senate to the President and Vice-President of the
31 United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United
32 States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States
33 House of Representatives, the United States Attorney General, the
34 Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection
35 Agency, the Governor and Attorney General of the State of New
36 Jersey, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of
37 Environmental Protection, and every member of Congress elected
38 from the State of New Jersey.

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41 STATEMENT

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43 This concurrent resolution urges the federal government to take
44 all available action to hold manufacturers of single-use plastic
45 products responsible for the pollution caused by the use and
46 disposal of those plastic products. The Congress and President of
47 the United States are urged to enact federal legislation requiring
48 manufacturer responsibility for single-use plastic products. Further,

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1 the Attorney General of the United States is urged, where
2 appropriate, to take action to institute litigation against
3 manufacturers of single-use plastic products to recoup clean-up
4 costs, water filtration expenses, and damages to natural resources
5 caused by discarded single-use plastic products.